CLAIMS

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method for managing a preference, comprising:

2   receiving a preference over a network associated with an entity

3   during a first transaction with a service;

4   storing the preference in a data store;

5   identifying a second transaction made by the entity for the service;

6   installing the preference on a computing device of the entity; and

7   activating the service, wherein the service automatically uses the

8   preference from the computing device of the entity.

1   2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the installing further includes creating

2   a cookie within a browser, wherein the cookie includes the preference and

3   the service consumes the cookie to acquire the preference.

1   3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the receiving further includes

2   identifying the preference as a search query that is processed by the

3   service.

1   4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the storing further includes storing the

2   preference in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) data format within the

3   data store.

1   5.   The method of claim 4 wherein the installing further includes installing

2   the preference in an XML format on the computing device.

1   6.   The method of claim 1 wherein the identifying further includes

2   detecting a login as the second transaction from the entity to the service and

3   performing the installing immediately after the login is successful.

1   7.   The method of claim 1 wherein the processing of the method acts as
2   a front-end interface to the service.

1   8.   A preference managing system, comprising:
2   a data store for housing preferences from entities;
3   a service that is accessed by the entities; and
4   a preference manager that records the preferences and associates
5   the preferences with the entities, and wherein the preference manager
6   installs the preferences in locations that are local to the entities and
7   expected by the service prior to the service initializing for access by the
8   entities.

1   9.   The preference managing system of claim 8 further comprising
2   browsers that are used by the entities to access the service over the
3   Internet.

1   10.   The preference managing system of claim 9 wherein the locations are
2   cookies located in storage locations accessible to the browsers.

1   11.   The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the preference
2   manager is automatically invoked when the entities attempt to access the
3   service for a first time during a transaction.

1   12.   The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the preference
2   manager is invoked by the service to record the preferences during
3   transactions between the service and the entities.

1   13.   The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the preference
2   manager stores the preferences and installs the preferences in Extensible
3   Markup Language (XML) formats.

1   14.   The preference managing system of claim 8 wherein the entities are
2   at least one of electronic representations of users, electronic representations
3   of applications, and electronic representations of applications.

1   15.   A portable preference data structure implemented in a computer-
2   readable medium, comprising:
3   an entity identifier; and
4   preference data;
5   wherein the entity identifier and preference data combine to form a
6   data store preference record for an entity, the record stored externally from
7   an environment of the entity and the preference data automatically
8   transferred and installed in a local environment of the entity when the entity
9   attempts to access a service which consumes the preference data.

1   16.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the local
2   environment is a cookie of a browser that is used by the entity to access the
3   service.

1   17.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the data
2   structure is managed by a front-end interface associated with the service.

1   18.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the
2   preference data is a search query that is processed by the service
3   automatically when the entity logs into the service.

1   19.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the
2   preference data includes a series of transactions previously processed with
3   the service by a prior transaction of the entity with the service, and wherein
4   the series of transactions are automatically processed by the service when

5   the entity logs into the service for a new transaction.

1   20.   The portable preference data structure of claim 15 wherein the data

2   structure is in an Extensible Markup Language (XML) format.